



Board Engagement Guide



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July 2025

Dear Prospective Board Member,

Thank you for your interest in serving on the Board of Directors for the Pauli Murray Awards Foundation (PMAF). This work was born out of a deep desire to honor, amplify, and support Black LGBTQ+ individuals whose lives and labor often go unseen or under-celebrated. I started this organization because I believe in the power of legacy, visibility, and collective liberation—and I knew from the beginning that this could not be a solo endeavor.

When you are trying to give birth to something for community, it must be done with community. That's why it means so much to share the privilege of leading this Board of Directors—a group of people who bring not only their talents and networks, but also their care, lived experience, and commitment to justice. Together, we are building something that reflects the brilliance and resilience of the very people we seek to uplift.

The Board of Directors plays a critical role in shaping the vision, strategy, and sustainability of the PMAF. Board members serve as ambassadors, advocates, and thought partners—helping to guide our work with integrity and intention. In this packet, you'll find more information about board responsibilities, expectations, and structure.

If you are interested in formally joining the Board, please take time to review the materials included here and then email us at info@paulimurrayawards.com with the subject line: Board Interest – [Your Name] to express your interest and introduce yourself.

Thank you again for believing in the mission and vision of the Pauli Murray Awards Foundation. I'm grateful for your willingness to explore how we might build this together.

Together We Rise,

Cory L. Scott

Chair of the Board & Founding Executive Director
Pauli Murray Awards Foundation
cls@paulimurrayawards.com



Vision & Mission

Vision:

The Pauli Murray Awards Foundation exists to honor and uplift Black LGBTQ+ individuals who are making significant contributions across various fields and communities.

Through recognition, support, and amplification, the Foundation seeks to combat historical erasure, affirm the impact of Black queer leadership, and ensure that their stories and achievements are acknowledged as an essential part of our collective history.

Mission:

The Pauli Murray Awards Foundation is dedicated to celebrating, supporting, and elevating Black LGBTQ+ excellence. Through awards, programs, and initiatives, we shine a light on individuals who are shaping culture, driving change, and making history in real time. Rooted in the legacy of Rev. Dr. Pauli Murray, we seek to ensure that Black queer brilliance is seen, valued, and remembered.



Board of Directors

Overview



Overview:

The Board of Directors will support the work of The Pauli Murray Awards Foundation (PMAF) by providing mission-based leadership and strategic governance. While day-to-day operations are led by the Executive Director (or equivalent leadership), the Board-Executive relationship is a partnership, and the appropriate involvement of the Board is both critical and expected.

Leadership, Governance, and Oversight

Board Members are responsible for:

- **Serving as trusted advisors** to the Executive Director and leadership team as they develop and implement the Foundation's strategic plan.
- **Reviewing outcomes and metrics** to evaluate the impact of the Foundation and regularly measuring its performance and effectiveness.
- Approving the Foundation's annual budget, audit reports, and major business decisions, ensuring compliance with all legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
- Assisting in identifying and recruiting other Board Members to enhance the organization's effectiveness.
- Supporting board resolutions and governance policies that advance the mission of the Foundation.
- Representing PMAF to stakeholders (such as donors, community leaders, and partners) and serving as an ambassador for the organization.
- Ensuring the Foundation's commitment to diversity and inclusion is reflected in its board, staff, and programs.

Fundraising & Financial Support

Board Members are expected to:

- **Prioritize PMAF as a philanthropic commitment** by making an annual financial contribution that reflects their capacity.
- **Support fundraising efforts** by leveraging personal and professional networks to help secure resources for the Foundation's programs.
- **Ensure financial sustainability** by advocating for the organization and helping to attract individual, corporate, and foundation donors.

Effective Board of Directors:

A strong Board of Directors is essential for the success of any nonprofit organization. The best boards share these six key characteristics:

Commitment to the Mission

Passionate about the organization's purpose and actively supports its goals.

Strategic Thinking

The ability to make long-term, high-impact decisions that align with the organization's goals.

Active Engagement

Attends meetings, serves on committees, and engages in events and advocacy efforts.

Financial and Legal Oversight

Ensuring the organization remains financially stable and compliant with all regulations.

Collaborative Leadership

Willingness to work with other board members, staff, and stakeholders to drive success.

Fundraising Capability

A commitment to giving personally and leveraging networks to raise funds and resources.

Board Terms & Participation

Board Members will serve three-year terms, with eligibility for reappointment for additional terms.

The Board will meet quarterly, with committee meetings scheduled as needed.

Qualifications

This is an extraordinary opportunity for individuals who are passionate about the mission of The Pauli Murray Awards Foundation and have a track record of leadership in public, private, or nonprofit sectors.

Ideal candidates will possess:

- Significant executive leadership experience in business, government, education, philanthropy, or the nonprofit sector.
- A strong commitment to advancing the visibility and impact of Black LGBTQ+ communities.
- A deep understanding of organizational governance, strategic planning, and fundraising.
- The ability to build relationships, influence stakeholders, and cultivate partnerships.
- Personal qualities of integrity, credibility, and a passion for the Foundation's mission.

Service on the Board of Directors is voluntary, and members will not receive compensation beyond reimbursement for pre-approved organizational expenses.

Four-Committee Board Structure

To ensure efficient governance, it is proposed that The Pauli Murray Awards Foundation Board be operated with a four-committee structure.

This approach allows board members to focus on key areas of responsibility while fostering strategic decision-making, financial sustainability, and organizational oversight.

Committee Structure Overview

The four committees—Strategic Oversight, Development & Engagement, Program and Board Affairs & Governance—will work collaboratively to support the foundation’s mission, enhance its impact, and ensure accountability at every level. Below is an overview of each committee and its primary functions.

Strategic Oversight:

Focuses on financial, operational, and administrative matters, including:

- Budget development and financial oversight
- Ensuring accountability for funds and financial controls
- Reviewing major grant applications and funding strategies

Development & Engagement:

Responsible for public relations, fundraising, and marketing, including:

- Developing and implementing a fundraising strategy
- Overseeing donor engagement and sponsorship opportunities
- Managing the Foundation’s brand and public messaging

Board Affairs & Governance:

Oversees the board’s health, structure, and effectiveness, including:

- Recruiting and onboarding new board members
- Conducting board evaluations and training
- Planning retreats and leadership development initiatives

Programs & Partnerships Committee:

Oversees award selection, grantee support, and collaborations that advance the foundation’s initiatives.

- Manages the selection process for Pauli Murray Award recipients
- Develops and oversees grant programs and grantee support
- Builds strategic partnerships with aligned organizations
- Evaluates the impact of foundation programs and initiatives

Board Member Commitment & Fundraising Expectation

Overview

As a Board Member, you are part of an essential team responsible for leading, supporting, and working collaboratively with staff and volunteers to ensure the success of PMAF's mission. One critical aspect of this role is fundraising. Funders and partners often ask whether 100% of the board contributes financially, and it is imperative that we set the standard for all future board members and supporters by demonstrating our commitment through both financial contributions and active engagement in fundraising efforts.

Understanding the “Write or Raise” Method

The “write or raise” method allows Board Members to fulfill their financial commitment in one of two ways:

1. Writing a personal check or making a direct contribution in the amount specified for each fiscal year.
2. Raising the equivalent amount by securing donations from others, such as friends, family, colleagues, and personal/professional networks.

This approach ensures that all Board Members play an active role in fundraising, whether through personal giving or mobilizing external support. It also provides flexibility, recognizing that different Board Members may have different capacities to give directly while still leveraging their networks to bring resources into the organization.

Below is a chart outlining the financial commitment expected from Board Members for the next three (3) years. This structure is designed to encourage both personal giving and external fundraising efforts to sustain PMAF's impact. Additionally, in-kind contributions of professional services or resources will be recorded as part of annual giving when applicable.

Fiscal Year	Board Member Commitment (Write or Raise)
FY 2025	≥ \$1,000
FY 2026	\$2,500 - \$3,500
FY 2027	≥ \$5,000



Face Up Project, Center for Documentary Studies, Durham, North Carolina.

Each Board Member is Expected to:

The “write or raise” method allows Board Members to fulfill their financial commitment in one of two ways:

1. **Contribute Financially** – Commit to a meaningful financial gift at the levels outlined above, either through personal giving (“write”) or by fundraising (“raise”).
2. **Fundraise for PMAF** – Leverage personal and professional connections to solicit contributions, secure sponsorships, or bring in in-kind support.
3. **Engage in PMAF Events** – Attend and actively support PMAF programs, networking, and fundraising events.

Additional Board Member Fundraising Engagement Opportunities:

- Conducting an annual end-of-year fundraising outreach to personal and professional contacts.
- Hosting or participating in fundraising events and community gatherings.
- Introducing PMAF to potential donors, corporate sponsors, and funding partners.
- Encouraging supporters to consider planned giving opportunities.

While financial contributions are important, PMAF also recognizes and values the many other ways board members contribute to our success—including expertise, professional guidance, and in-kind resources. To help facilitate fiscal planning and minimize repeated requests, each board member is asked to complete the following pledge form.